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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 DOHA 000262

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [QA](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: MINSTATE WELCOMES OPPORTUNITY TO BRIEF SE GRATION
ON QATAR'S INITIATIVE ON DARFUR

REF: A. APRIL 17 SHORTLEY-LEBARON E-MAIL
[1](#)B. DOHA 133

Classified By: Ambassador Joseph E. LeBaron, for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

(C) KEY POINTS

-- Ambassador briefed Minister of State Ahmed Al-Mahmoud
April 19 on U.S. Special Envoy on Sudan Scott Gration's
current thinking and activities.

-- Al-Mahmoud looks forward to meeting with SE Gration and
briefing him on the work he and UN/African Union Mediator
Djibril Bassole are doing to satisfy the Justice and Equality
Movement's (JEM) needs on a prisoner release, broaden
opposition group dialogue with the Government of Sudan beyond
JEM, and encourage a cessation of hostilities along the
border between Sudan and Chad.

-- Al-Mahmoud hopes SE Gration and the other members of the
P-3, especially France, will exert pressure on Abdul Wahid to
participate in Qatar's Initiative on Darfur.

-- The Minister of State is concerned that Egypt's competing
Darfur initiative risks undermining Qatar's efforts with
Bassole. He would like the U.S. to clarify its position,
emphasizing that Qatar needs "support and time" from the U.S.
and the international community in order to succeed in its
mediation efforts.

-- Working with the Libyans, Qatar has agreed to host
discussions in Doha starting April 26th on the cessation of
hostilities between the GOS and Chad. Chad and the GOS have
passed the GOQ delegation lists, headed by Chad's FM and
Sudan's Minister of International Cooperation. Al-Mahmoud
still does not have a delegation list from Libya, even though
he expects the Libyan FM to serve as head of that delegation.

(C) COMMENTS

-- Qatar believes strongly that, to end the violence in
Darfur, Chad and Sudan will have to agree to cease
hostilities, to include supporting and equipping their
favored militias and rebel groups. Thus, the drive now by
Qatar and Libya to gather representatives from Sudan and Chad
in Doha for what appears to be an open-ended negotiation.

-- The April 26th gathering will be a long shot. Al-Mahmoud
said the two delegations, assisted by Qatar and Libya, will
be negotiating from scratch.

End Key Points and Comments.

11. (C) Per Ref A, Ambassador informed Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Ahmed Al-Mahmoud April 19 that U.S. Special Envoy (SE) for Sudan Scott Gration seeks a close, working relationship with him and would like to speak with Al-Mahmoud by phone later this week. Ambassador said that SE Gration planned to see both President Deby of Chad and Khalil Ibrahim in coming days. SE Gration is also interested in visiting Doha in late April or early May for any public relaunch of the Doha mediation efforts on Darfur, Ambassador said.

12. (C) In order to succeed, Ambassador told Al-Mahmoud, SE Gration views a prisoner release by the Government of Sudan (GOS) as essential. This is because the prisoners the GOS has released thus far were not the prisoners that the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) wanted released. Absent the release of additional prisoners, Ibrahim would not agree to travel to Doha.

13. (C) Ambassador conveyed SE Gration's idea that the GOQ might fly Ibrahim from N'Djamena to Doha around April 29, assuming the prisoner exchange issues are satisfactorily resolved. Ambassador then asked if the GOQ is prepared to have other groups beyond JEM return to Doha for talks. Was Qatar continuing to work with Bassole on widening participation?

SLM-UNITY, ALL GROUPS WELCOME

14. (C) Al-Mahmoud responded that he was aware that Ibrahim planned to visit April 28-29. Al-Mahmoud said as part of implementing the agreements with JEM (Ref B), he and Bassole

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continue to engage the GOS on freeing the prisoners identified by JEM, adding that he would "be happy to discuss our efforts with SE Gration."

15. (C) Al-Mahmoud voiced concern that, recently, there have been mixed and conflicting signals from Egypt and other parties about the Qatar Initiative on Darfur. Al-Mahmoud said he continues to speak frequently with UN and African Union (AU) Mediator Djibril Bassole by phone (usually at least once per day), and that he and Bassole believe that SLM-Unity is ready to come to Doha for talks. SLM-Unity is expected to arrive in Doha the last week of April, but Al-Mahmoud said he had not received any confirmation of this.

16. (C) According to Al-Mahmoud, SLM-Unity "is feeling ignored." But they have not been ignored, asserted Al-Mahmoud, who recounted how in coordination with Bassole all Sudanese opposition groups were invited to participate simultaneously -- including SLM-Unity, JEM, and Fur leader Abdul Wahid. Al-Mahmoud blamed the misunderstanding on the poor diffusion of information through the fractured leadership and membership of SLM-Unity. Al-Mahmoud stressed that all opposition groups are welcome to take part in talks in Doha. He complained that Abdul Wahid in particular is not participating, and Al-Mahmoud renewed his request for the P-3 (U.S., UK, and France), especially France, to exert pressure on him.

17. (C) Ambassador noted that SE Gration plans to stop in Switzerland en route to Chad to meet with Abdul Wahid. Al-Mahmoud said he hoped SE Gration would use the opportunity to "encourage Abdul Wahid" to travel to Doha.

CHAD-SUDAN DIALOGUE

18. (C) On Chad, Al-Mahmoud stressed that Libya is in charge of this file. Working with the Libyans, Qatar agreed to host April 7 cease-fire discussions between the GOS and Chad, but the Libyans have since asked to reschedule the talks for

April 26 in Doha. Chad and the GOS have passed the GOQ delegation lists, headed by Chad's FM and Sudan's Minister of International Cooperation, for the April 26 meeting, but Al-Mahmoud still does not have a delegation list from Libya, even though he expects the Libyan FM to serve as head of that delegation. Al-Mahmoud stressed that the GOS and Chad, along with the Libyans, would come to Doha for discussions only. If an agreement between those parties is reached in Qatar, the signing ceremony for the agreement would be held in Libya under that government's sponsorship.

¶9. (C) Al-Mahmoud added that he and Bassole were also working together to encourage Chad and the GOS not to "incite activity" along their common border and to bring the militias under control. President Deby of Chad, said Al-Mahmoud, should not allow attacks against Sudan from Chad, and the GOS should likewise refrain from sponsoring attacks in Sudan.

NEED FOR U.S. SUPPORT

¶10. (C) Al-Mahmoud underscored that Qatar welcomes the visit of SE Gration and stands ready to meet him at anytime in Doha. Al-Mahmoud said Qatar needs U.S. support for Qatar's Initiative on Darfur, and he is willing to travel to meet SE Gration elsewhere to obtain the public U.S. support that is critical to Qatar's joint efforts with Bassole to maintain forward momentum. Al-Mahmoud said Qatar "knows that some initiatives (launched by other countries) have been rejected by the Darfur parties." Asked to identify specific initiatives, Al-Mahmoud pointed to Egypt's initiative -- launched after Qatar began working with Bassole -- and said it did not have support to succeed. However, he said, Egypt's initiative could succeed in derailing Qatar's ongoing efforts.

¶11. (C) It is the people of Darfur, said Al-Mahmoud, "who suffer every time there is a change of course." Qatar needs U.S. and international support for its current initiative, in close cooperation with Bassole, to succeed. Al-Mahmoud said he "respects whatever you (the U.S.) decide to do, but please tell us what you want."

¶12. (C) Al-Mahmoud closed the meeting by emphasizing the "confusion" that reigns among countries partnering with Qatar on Darfur mediation. Al-Mahmoud said his counterparts are calling him, seeking assurances that the U.S. continues to support Qatar's Initiative on Darfur. Al-Mahmoud stressed

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that Qatar "needs support and time" to succeed.
LeBaron